

RI Career and Technical Board of Trustees

Appeals for Out-of-District Enrollment in “Substantially Similar” Programs

Effective February 15, 2022

Background

Rhode Island’s career and technical education (CTE) laws (16-45-6.1) were amended, effective July 9, 2021. These amendments clarified that students have a right to enroll in state approved CTE programs outside their district:

“All students retain the right to enroll in a state approved career and technical education program approved by the CTE board of trustees in communities outside their community of residence.” R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-45-6.1(d)(1).

This right applies if there is not a “substantially similar” program in-district:

“Students may request access to state CTE board-approved career preparation programs outside their school district if their home district does not provide a substantially similar state-approved CTE program.” R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-45-6.1(e).*

Note:* Students enrolled in, accepted to, or attending a state CTE board-approved program of choice outside of the students’ home district **prior to January 1, 2022, are allowed to remain enrolled in that program and are **exempt** from this “substantially similar” requirement. See R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-45-6.1(d)(4) and § 16-45-6.1(j).

The substantially similar list will be published by the RIDE and the CTE Board of Trustees (CTEBOT) annually in January 2022 for the following year. This document serves as that list.

“Effective January 15, 2022, and every year thereafter, the CTE board of trustees and the department of elementary and secondary education shall publish a detailed list of substantially similar CTE programs for the upcoming school year. The list will be used to support students and their families in accessing CTE board of trustees approved career and technical education programs. There will be a thirty-day (30) period for schools and districts to appeal the substantially similar designation to the board of education.” R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-45-6.1(d)

For reference, the full statutory text can be found [here](#).

List of substantially similar programs for 2022-23

RIDE and the CTBOT determined at the CTBOT December 10, 2021, meeting by unanimous vote, that there were no substantially similar CTE programs in Rhode Island for the 2022-23 school year.

[The list of current state approved CTE programs is here.](#)

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Appeals Process

If a student requests access to a State CTE Board-approved career preparation program outside the student's home district and there is disagreement as to whether the home district and the outside district offer "substantially similar" CTE programs, the CTE Board of Trustees is authorized to resolve such disagreements between the student and the home district. See R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-45-6.1(e).

Effective February 15, 2022, all appeals for consideration by the CTE Board of Trustees are to be sent by email to:

RI Career and Technical Education Board of Trustees

Linda Larsen, Chair

Email: ricteboard@gmail.com